

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Holloway Hill, Malmesbury, SN16 9BB,

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' attainment throughout the school is above average in writing, reading and mathematics, as it has been for several years. It continues to rise strongly, especially in writing.
- Pupils make good progress. This is because consistently good teaching combines effectively with pupils' enthusiastic desire to learn, so that they achieve well.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is excellent, and they are very well cared for and safe.
- Teachers have high expectations, relate well to their pupils, and encourage both cooperation and independence.
- School leaders have been rigorous and successful in their promotion of better teaching, which has had a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- Pupils' wider learning is enhanced by many practical activities, especially in history, and educational visits, clubs and links to the local high school.
- The school is led very effectively by an evaluative and sympathetic headteacher, who is well supported by other school leaders.
- The governing body promotes school improvement strongly, and is particularly attentive in monitoring staff performance and ensuring the school gives value for money.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers are not rigorous enough in setting time targets for tasks so some pupils lack urgency in their work and do not complete tasks quickly enough or pay enough attention to detail.
- Teachers' marking and its contribution to learning is inconsistent across the school.
- The teaching of reading skills is less effective than that of writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by six teachers.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, members of the school management team and three members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with an officer from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He examined safeguarding arrangements, and other documents, including school development plans and self-evaluation, external evaluations of the school's effectiveness, health and safety logs and school policies, and a range of pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of 49 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as three letters and an e-mail.
- The inspector also examined questionnaire responses from 13 members of staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a very small number of other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is higher than average.
- The school is organised into five mixed-aged classes.
- A week prior to the inspection, extensive new building works, which have caused considerable disruption to the day-to-day life of the school, were completed. Work on landscaping the outdoor areas and developing the playground, especially adjacent to the Reception class, continues.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' basic reading skills to levels similar to their writing skills by:
 - ensuring that from Reception onwards, pupils develop a thorough understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) and use these skills effectively in their reading
 - developing reading diaries or journals which give pupils, teachers, and parents and carers clear indications of pupils' understanding of their reading books.
- Sharpen teachers' guidance to pupils in their learning activities by:
 - giving pupils specific and rigorous time targets for completing work, taking into consideration their individual learning skills
 - introducing consistent marking of pupils' work, which balances praise with guidance as to what pupils need to improve, and checking that this happens quickly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the school with the skills and understanding expected for their age. Children achieve well in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress is especially good in speech and language development, and in the development of independence and self-confidence.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve well. For a number of years, they have entered Year 3 with above average standards in writing, reading and mathematics. Although there was a slight drop in attainment in 2010/11, there was a rise to former levels in 2012, and this has continued.
- Basic skills continue to be reinforced in Years 3 and 4, and pupils' learning accelerates further in Years 5 and 6. Many pupils by the end of Year 6 are reaching standards higher than expected for their age, with writing being at a particularly high level in 2012, and for pupils currently in Years 5 and 6.
- All groups of pupils achieve equally well. The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has caused concern in the past, but the school has taken effective steps to remedy this so that these pupils also make good progress. Similarly good progress is made by the small number of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, and by pupils who enter the school other than at the usual times. The performance of boys and girls varies from year to year, but does not show any long-term trend.
- Although pupils read widely and reach above average levels when they leave school, their reading skills are not yet at the same level as their writing skills. The recent phonic screening test for pupils in Year 1 showed their skills to be average, which was lower than the school anticipated. The test indicated, as does the reading of older pupils, that insufficient attention has been paid in the past to the teaching of letters and sounds so that pupils have a good understanding of how to build words with which they are unfamiliar.
- The pupils' reading record books, some of which they fill in themselves, give insufficient guidance, especially by teachers, on improving reading skills. Most only indicate the pages read.

The quality of teaching is good

- Although consistently good, teaching is not outstanding because not all teachers make sure that pupils make rapid and sustained progress in their learning. Pupils have many good learning opportunities, but teachers do not always emphasise how quickly they expect pupils to reach their targets, leading sometimes to a rather leisurely approach to their tasks.
- Some marking is exemplary, giving clear guidelines to pupils on what and how they should improve in their work. However, other marking, whilst often praising pupils, gives little indication as to how they can improve. Very occasionally, some work is not marked at all.
- Teaching in the Reception class is creative and well organised, providing a wealth of stimulating resources. Good progress is promoted by the wide range of monitoring activities to check every aspect of children's learning.
- Teaching in all other years is good, and teachers are careful to provide for the specific needs of pupils in mixed-aged classes.
- Teachers have high expectations and frequently encourage pupils to learn across several associated subjects. This was seen in the Year 1/2 class where pupils enthusiastically talked and wrote about the Great Fire of London, and made models of 17th century houses, one pupil commenting, 'They needed these beams to keep the roofs stable.' High expectations were also evident in the Year 5/6 class, when pupils confidently analysed Macbeth's thoughts on his relationship with Banquo.
- Teachers work closely with energetic and effective teaching assistants, particularly when planning and organising the interventions necessary to support disabled pupils and those with

special educational needs.

- Pupils' progress over time is analysed closely by teachers, and this information is being used successfully to raise standards.
- Teachers promote literacy and numeracy well across all subjects, especially through extended writing. Although information and communication technology is not promoted at quite the same level, the school is planning the more widespread provision of individual computers and electronic tablets to support learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic, attentive and curious, and always interested in the activities they are given. They are especially good at working with each other in pairs or small groups, and enjoy evaluating each other's work.
- Pupils are always cheerful, but also respectful and polite towards adults. Many brim with self-confidence when talking about their learning.
- Children in the Reception class soon settle in to school routines, behave very well, and are helped by the pupils in Year 1 who are also in their class. They rapidly learn how to take turns, share and work with each other without arguing.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in lessons. They also have a good practical knowledge of acting safely, as they have experienced life on the building site at the school for several months. Older pupils, especially, show great consideration for the needs of the youngest children in the playground.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of all types of bullying, in particular, threats through mobile telephones or the internet. One pupil has thoughtfully proposed the appointment of 'bully buddies', referring to them as 'older, responsible, sympathetic pupils who younger children will find easier to approach than adults if they have problems'.
- There are many effective links with external support agencies when specialised services are required to support pupils and families in difficult circumstances.
- Attendance and punctuality continue to be higher than average. There have been no exclusions for several years.
- Parents and carers are almost unanimous, as are staff, in their praise of pupils' behaviour in the school and its environment, with one commenting, 'The school provides a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our children.'

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led very effectively by a headteacher who is constantly around the school and makes sure she is readily available for pupils, staff and parents and carers at all times.
- She has led other leaders in the highly accurate self-evaluation of the school with assurance and considerable perception. These strengths have also been helpful in the performance management of teaching and the identification of training needs which have resulted in an improvement in the consistency and provision of good teaching. All teachers understand that pay progression depends upon them reaching their performance targets.
- Other leaders, such as the special educational needs coordinator, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the literacy coordinator, have also made notable contributions to improvements in their areas of responsibility, and to the raising of pupils' achievement.
- Substantial inspection evidence of acceleration in the raising of attainment of nearly all pupils indicates that school leadership has good capacity to continue to improve.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of exciting and challenging activities that reinforce the staff's and pupils' own high expectations of behaviour, and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development especially well.

- The school has an excellent partnership with parents and carers, and has a supportive parents association. All parents attend the regular parents' evenings.
 - The school promotes equal opportunities effectively. Leaders ensure that a lively and stimulating learning environment is in place throughout the school, and that there is no discrimination through gender, disability, special educational needs or faith.
 - The use of the pupil premium funding is carefully monitored, especially by the governing body, and its value for money is closely measured. The school provides additional one-to-one extra adult support and resources for this small group of pupils. This has led to improvement in the attainment and progress of these pupils in each subject, and there is now little difference in their performance compared with that of other pupils.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The school is strongly and decisively led by an experienced Chair of the Governing Body who works closely with the headteacher. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They also have a good record of taking decisive and sometimes difficult decisions. Governors have a very clear understanding of their increased role in relating school targets to the improvement of pupils' progress and the quality of teachers' performance. They have been proactive in making decisions about pay awards for teachers based on their performance targets. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are in place, and that school policies are reviewed on a regular and planned basis.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 126424 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 403607 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 131 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Janine Birkin-Hewitt |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth Christopher |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 February 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01666 822331 |
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